

# COHESION AND COHERENCE

**Cohesion** and **coherence** refer to the connection and development of ideas in your writing. With cohesive and coherent writing, you can guide your reader smoothly through your sentences, paragraphs, and paper as a whole.

Did you know that **cohesion** and **coherence** have the same etymological roots? Both terms come from the Latin *co* (“together”) and *haerere* (“to stick”) – combined, “to stick together”!

## COHESION

**Cohesion** refers to the connection of ideas from **sentence to sentence**. It deals with how your words and sentences link together.

### TIPS FOR ACHIEVING COHESION

1. **Start your paragraph with a topic sentence.** A topic sentence sums up the main point of your paragraph.
2. **Organize your sentences in a logical order.** You can logically organize your sentence using three methods:

- a. **Begin sentences with familiar information and end sentences with new information.**

Readers get familiar information from sentences they just read or from general knowledge. They prefer to see *familiar, easy* information before *unfamiliar, complex* information.

Ex. In 2019, *astronomers* made history by photographing a black hole. *They discovered the black hole* at the center of a giant galaxy called Messier 87.\*

- These sentences *begin with familiar information* that the reader would have from previous sentences or general knowledge. The sentences also end with new information that the reader would find unfamiliar or complex.

- b. **Use transition words.** Transition words add ideas together, indicate cause and effect, contrast ideas, emphasize ideas, and organize ideas

- Additive Words: additionally, also, furthermore, in addition, moreover, not only

Ex. Texting while driving is against the law. *Additionally*, it is very dangerous.

- Cause and Effect Words: as a result, because, consequently, hence, therefore, thus, since

Ex. Colin finished work early. *As a result*, he could join his brother for dinner.

- **Contrasting Words:** although, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, unless, whereas, yet  
Ex. *Although* it was raining outside, I decided to go jogging.
- **Emphasizing Words:** for example, for instance, in fact, in other words, specifically  
Ex. Elephants experience many human-like emotions. *For example*, they can feel compassion and grief.
- **Organizing Words:** afterward, finally, firstly, lastly, previously, since, subsequently, then  
Ex. Margot stayed up late to watch the hockey game. *Afterward*, she went to bed.

c. **Repeat key terms and phrases.** Reuse terms and phrases throughout sentences and paragraphs, especially if the reader is unfamiliar with those terms and phrases.

Ex. All *coffee* drinkers should try a *cortado*. A *cortado* is a Spanish beverage consisting of *espresso* topped with steamed *milk*. The combination of bitter *espresso* with creamy *milk* provides a delicious alternative to regular *coffee*.\*\*

- These sentences repeat key terms such as *coffee*, *cortado*, *espresso*, and *milk*.

3. **End your paragraph with a concluding sentence.** Your concluding sentence restates the main idea of the paragraph. It can also act as a lead-in for the main idea of the next paragraph, which creates a smooth transition between paragraphs.

## COHERENCE

**Coherence** refers to the connection of ideas in your **paper as a whole**. It deals with the logical development of your thesis and paragraphs.

### TIPS FOR ACHIEVING COHERENCE

1. **Create an outline before writing your paper.**
  - Your outline should include a clear thesis and paragraphs that support your thesis.
2. **Organize your paragraphs in a logical order.**
  - Each paragraph should flow logically into the next.
3. **Keep one idea to one paragraph.**
  - All the sentences in one paragraph should relate to the main idea of that paragraph.
4. **Create a reverse outline after writing your paper. See our “How to Create a Reverse Outline Resource” for further information.**
  - After you finish your paper, open a blank document. Write your thesis statement and a one-sentence summary of each paragraph in the document.
  - If you struggle to summarize the main idea of a paragraph, you may have too many ideas in that paragraph. Try splitting the paragraph into two or more paragraphs.

- If a topic sentence differs vastly from your one-sentence summary of the paragraph's main idea, you may need to revise that topic sentence.
- Once your reverse outline is complete, make sure that your paragraphs support your thesis and flow in a logical order.

\* Overbye, D. (2019, April 10). Darkness visible, finally: Astronomers capture first ever image of a black hole. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/10/science/black-hole-picture.html>

\*\* Kanniah, J. (2020, March 2). What is a cortado? *Perfect Daily Grind*.  
<https://www.perfectdailygrind.com/2020/03/what-is-a-cortado/>

**PRACTICE NOW**